

ANNEX G TO ANCHORAGE EARTHQUAKE CDRP **CIVIL AFFAIRS (COMMUNITY RELATIONS)**

1. **GENERAL.** USACE field personnel will have extensive contact with disaster victims. In some cases, such as Structural Safety Assessment, such contact is an integral part of the mission. In other cases, disaster victims will simply seek out the first person that they can identify as being a Federal or state employee. In either case, employees need to provide appropriate information to ensure that the victims are aware of available assistance programs and understand how to access those programs.

a. Department of Defense refers to this activity as Civil Affairs, and includes it in its operational planning.

b. FEMA refers to this activity as Community Relations (CR). They include a CR office on the staff of the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO), and have a CR Support Annex in the Federal Response Plan.

c. Employees must remember that the victims of the disaster have been through a very traumatic experience. Many will be showing the effects of extreme stress. Since much of the needed assistance will be outside of USACE authorities, employees need to quickly direct the victims to the proper sources for such assistance.

2. GENERAL PROCEDURES.

a. After a major disaster, FEMA deploys field officers into affected communities to gather and disseminate information about the disaster response and recovery process. The CR function is responsible for assessing and documenting the social, political, and cultural aspects of a disaster area which might affect the disaster response and recovery effort. The goal is to insure that all citizens in the affected area are aware of available Federal disaster assistance programs and how to access them. This includes the development of programs to reach special-needs disaster victims (e.g., the elderly, physically or mentally disabled, and those who do not use English as their primary language).

b. The American Red Cross is the lead agency for meeting the immediate needs of disaster victims (shelter, food, etc.).

c. FEMA recovery programs for individuals use a combination of on-scene representatives and toll-free telephone numbers. Immediately after the declaration, disaster workers arrive and set up a central field office to coordinate the recovery effort. A toll-free telephone number is published for use by affected residents and business owners in registering for assistance. A toll-free Helpline is also provided to allow victims to obtain status reports on their applications. Disaster Recovery Centers also are opened where disaster victims can meet with program representatives and obtain information about available aid and the recovery process.

d. Special procedures may be utilized when necessary. For example, in-person registration has been used when language, communications problems, or other factors interfered with use of the toll-free registration.

e. The State of Alaska has its own assistance programs, which may extend the Federal assistance or cover additional persons. The State and FEMA are both represented at the Disaster Recovery Center, so victims are able to identify the available assistance at one time.

f. Alaska District, Regulatory Branch is often a participant in the Disaster Recovery Center, to insure that the victims are not delayed and do not violate wetland protection restrictions. Details and included in Annex L, Appendix 3.

3. USACE OPERATIONS.

a. The ESF Cell in the DFO and the USACE PAO staff will obtain, or create, a summary listing of points of contact for the various types of assistance that individual disaster victims may require. For example, this would include food, emergency shelter, counseling, housing reoccupancy inspections, etc.

b. Each deployed USACE employee will be briefed on the disaster situation, including the status of the victims, prior to beginning field work.

c. Each USACE employee working in the field will be provided with the list of points of contact for assistance.

d. Employees will be reminded of the need for care in dealing with disaster victims. They need to be careful that they do not promise-or appear to promise-assistance that is not covered by a USACE authority or mission.

e. Employees need to use care in relating to the victims. For example, employees who boast of “red tagging” a building should not be chosen for response operations.

f. Supervisors need to monitor response personnel, and watch for signs of excessive stress. In certain cases,